



Washington State Patrol Media Release

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Child-Set Fire Kills Again

Three children have died in fires over the past six months, the most recent one occurring in Richland last week. These fires were started by children with lighters. Acting State Fire Marshal Michael Matlick said "This is attributed to a child's curiosity with fire, using matches or lighters that are found in the home".

Fires that are started by children most often result in the death of the child that started the fire and their siblings. Matlick added "In fires started by children, 80% of the time, the victim is a child under the age of 6. This places pre-school aged children who engage in fire play as one of the highest risk groups for the potential of injury or death".

Two common themes exist in these child caused fires; a lack of appropriate supervision and an access to the matches and/or lighters. "The solution to this problem is fairly simple--keep matches and lighters high and out of reach of children," said Lisa Garvich of the State Firestoppers Program. The Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program, called Firestoppers, provides parents with tools that can help families learn how to reduce the chance of a tragic fire.

The Washington Firestoppers Program is dedicated to providing services to address this problem. For additional information visit "Juvenile Firesetters" on the Washington State Patrol – Office of the State Fire Marshal web page at <http://www.wsp.wa.gov> or contact your local fire department.

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